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South Vietnam: Pressure on Saigon to take steps to protect Vietnamese living in Cambodia is growing, but formidable diplomatic and political obstacles are hindering effective government action.

Students and Buddhist sympathizers already disaffected with the Thieu regime took to the streets this weekend protesting the atrocities and demanding action by the government to remedy the situation. Local political leaders and trade unionists joined them on Sunday at memorial services for the Vietnamese victims at the An Quang Pagoda, a prominent center for antigovernment activity. The press reports that the oppositionist National Salvation Front in a communiqué signed by nearly 190 politicians and released this weekend bypassed the government and appealed to the UN to intervene.

The government clearly recognizes the need for action, but it faces a complicated and hazardous course. It is trying to demonstrate its concern and to cool the situation while avoiding injury to Cambodian sensitivities that might prejudice prospects for improved relations. It has so far probed discreetly along a wide front, but has been stymied at nearly every turn.

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The government may have to show some results soon or be confronted with more serious opposition than anything it has faced in recent months, particularly if the students and dissidents aligned with them make this volatile situation their main anti-government issue.

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